



Volunteer View

The Spotlight Issue!

In this issue, we highlight some of the volunteers who inspire us all. Their dedication to our parks and reservoirs, their unique projects, the amazing hours they donate, and the memories they create for our visitors and for us needs to be recognized and applauded!



2007 SPR Volunteer of the Year, Terri Warne

By: Jim Eagleman, BCSP Interpreter

Terri has worked as a part time interpreter at Brown County State Park for the past 6 years. Her desire to become a better

interpreter resulted in her attaining the Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) certification with the National Association of Interpretation in 2005. With this training, Terri continues to add her unique touch to the Nature Center, annual seasonal training, special events like Smokey Safety Day and the Haunted Trail and her personal interest: bats.

Her story of how she became interested in bats is a unique introduction to all her bat talks. While on a camping trip several years ago to Indiana Dunes State Park, she noticed there was a bat talk that evening. Realizing it was time to finally confront her panic, a real and debilitating one since childhood, they attended the program. While it was a slow and difficult process, Terri came away with a new appreciation of the animal that made nearly all previous outdoor experiences unbearable, especially overnight camping trips.

So moved by the learning experience, she soon began reading more about bats and their status worldwide. Not one to take on any challenge lightly, her pursuit soon led to caring for injured bats, and Terri soon started her own bat rehabilitation service from her home in Brown County, Bat World South Indy, batworldsouthindy@msn.com. Her programs at the nature center have led to more contacts for her not-for-profit educational programs, and a dedicated following at the park. She maintains an outside bat-rearing cage at her home and is available to all calls we receive at the park regarding bat problems.

Terri's appearance at the state fair wasn't all that noteworthy, unless you consider she appeared only a few days after suffering a fractured ankle, acquired while volunteering! Days after falling while gathering craft materials on Smokey Safety Day at the park, Terri

appeared at the state fair with her live bats, as jovial as usual. "The show must go on", she joked, wearing a supportive boot.

Earlier in the year, realizing our nature center storage areas needed attention, (items in the storage closet fell out every time the door was opened), Terri took a few days to sort things into appropriate places. She saw the storage problems as a detriment to program efficiency, and stepped in to correct a problem.

"Where better to offer a Halloween event than on the park Friends Trail?", she asked the BCSP Friends Group, proposing a Haunted Trail in October, 2005. A bit apprehensive, the Friends decided to go along with



Terri hugs her husband, Brad, who is wearing the Smokey suit.

her seemingly endless enthusiasm. The first year, there was an estimated attendance of over a thousand visitors, and an even larger turnout in 2006. Her entire family as usual gets into the production, as do all the costumed Friends who consider it a lot of work for one night, but also a lot of fun. Mindful a frightening activity might scare little folks, Terri proposed a children's Trick-or-Treat event before dusk, when accompanied by a parent. There is no

charge for these events, a Friend's decision. Still, amounts collected in donation boxes allow a small profit after costs are met. In 2007, it was decided to expand the Haunted Trail to include a pumpkin-carving contest to compliment the popular campsite decorating contest, another successful and fun event for campers.

The Friends consider Terri a special member. Terri exhibits the steadfast and resolute volunteer help, unique in only a few individuals. We see these people only a few times over the course of a career. To expand her knowledge as an interpreter on a variety of subjects is admirable. But to contribute in other and meaningful ways is the mark of a dependable, caring and adaptable individual.





Loretta Heiniger– 2007 SPR Volunteer of the Year

By Angie Manuel, Mounds State Park Interpretive Naturalist

Though Loretta just became an official volunteer this past year, she has watched over this park for decades from her home across the road.

Loretta began her volunteering career by presenting programs about monarch butterflies. In her own house and a backyard tent, she rescues, rears, and feeds constantly hungry caterpillars. Once they form a chrysalis, she anxiously awaits for the monarch butterfly to hatch out. Loretta tags them for research, and lets them go. She photographically documented this process and designed a fun and educational program for eager visitors. She even allows groups over to her house to witness her tent full of crawling caterpillars and butterfly chrysalis.

In addition to being a butterfly wrangler, Loretta is the highest level of Master Gardener. In the gardening world, she's well known for her hosta collection, from which she has donated and helped plant in the "Hostatality" Garden here at the park. At Mounds, she is recognized for her knowledge and practice of landscaping with native plants. An advocate for using hardy Indiana plants, her own yard is a fine example.

Loretta took her two passions in life, monarchs and gardening, and helped Mounds design a Butterfly Garden and Monarch Waystation. With measurements retrieved by fellow volunteer gardener Tom Parker, Loretta drew detailed plans of the garden layout. Her passion for this project was evident when she took into consideration every plant's height, bloom color, bloom time, food source, visitor visibility, water needs, etc. She even planned necessary warming areas (large rocks) for the butterflies to rest. The end result was a Certified Monarch Waystation—a 6,500 sq ft. garden filled with over 1600 plants of almost 50 plant species, mostly donated by Loretta and loving grown from seed or start.

Of course, it took many volunteers to help prepare landscaping beds and plant hundreds of flowers, but Loretta was an amazing leader. Her work didn't stop there. Once the other volunteers left after the week of

work, Loretta was at the garden day and night for most of the summer. It was common to find her out there at 7pm pulling weeds, watering, or rinsing off her yellow-stained hands from having killed

hundreds of aphid insects that consume milkweed nutrients.

Without knowing it, Loretta turned into a volunteer interpreter. She loved when park visitors would approach her while tending the garden and ask questions. This first year garden was a huge success with beautiful blooms and hundreds of butterflies. Caterpillars munched on the milkweed all summer long, and chrysalis hung from the benches. Loretta turned a plain grassy knoll into a beautiful, productive area for wildlife, kids, and adults. Visitors flocked to the garden throughout the summer for special programs and strolled through it, reading an informative interpretive sign written by Loretta.

And while many thought fall meant the end of work in the garden, Loretta harvested thousands of seeds from various plants. She put them in small individual bags, labeled them with instructions, and let us sell them in the Visitor Center gift shop. An instant hit, folks were buying a dozen at a time.

The garden was officially dedicated at a ceremony highlighting Loretta's generosity of time and energy, her passion, expertise, and enthusiasm for Indiana native wildflowers and the creatures that depend on them. The local media attended and ran a beautiful article.

It is also worth mentioning that the park received about 1,400 free wildflower starts from the state nursery this past spring. Loretta was excited to hear this until we actually got the plants and discovered they were bare roots. Some were for the butterfly garden, but most were destined for another wildflower area for a scout group project. Weather prohibited the scouts from starting their work, so Loretta volunteered to pot all of the bare root plants. Along with the help of some other volunteers, over a thousand wildflowers were potted, stored, and watered daily at Loretta's house – her driveway a makeshift nursery. She saved us several hundred dollars in plant costs.

Loretta is now designing a garden for the historic Bronnensberg homestead here at Mounds. She has already begun planning and researching the food plants, herbs, and medicinal wildflowers that the family would have grown in the 1800's garden.

Loretta Heiniger is a 2007 Volunteer of the Year. Not only did she contribute the most volunteer hours of 2007 at Mounds State Park (over 500), but her projects added beauty to the park, new interpretive opportunities, a diverse insect habitat, and revenue to the gift shop. Through her gardening and wildlife projects, Loretta has improved visitor experience at Mounds State Park.



2007 Partnership Awards

Hoosier Mountain Biking Association



Up until a few years ago, Indiana state parks were essentially considered off limits to mountain bikes. The Hoosier Mountain Biking Association (HMBA) would change all of that. This organization convinced the DNR administration that mountain bike trails would be a popular addition to our parks, not a detriment. It helped HMBA's argument when they volunteered to build and maintain the trails themselves.

Brown County and Versailles State Park were chosen as ideal locations for mountain biking, for the hilly terrain and considerable unbroken acreage. Volunteers from HMBA began planning trails that would not only be enjoyable to ride, but sustainable overall. Using hand tools and a stump cutter, HMBA members volunteered thousands of hours to create fourteen miles of trails in Brown County, and 12 miles in Versailles. They applied for and received a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant for \$150,000, which is the largest federal grant ever

received by a non-profit mountain bike club. This money was used to hire a two person team to design and build trails, and to purchase needed materials and equipment. Not only did they build the trails themselves, but continue to monitor trail conditions, posting trail advisory notices and recommendations at trail heads and online, as well as taking care of any needed maintenance themselves.

HMBA has already put on several successful special mountain biking events at these properties, and these trails are gaining attention across the nation as being top mountain biking



destinations. Mountain bikers are not alone in enjoying these trails, as they are proving to be quite popular among runners and hikers as well. Additional trails are being planned at several other park properties, and we will see quite a few ribbon cutting ceremonies for mountain bike trails across the state in the next few years.

The partnership between the Department of Natural Resources and the Hoosier Mountain Biking Association has been a win-win arrangement. The mountain bikers have done almost all the work in creating for themselves and others some great places to enjoy their pastimes, and the DNR has gained the support of a dedicated new user group as well as a new source of revenue.



2007 Partnership Awards continued...

Ralph and Sheri Trine

By: Terri Coleman, Regional Supervisor

This is a unique and wonderful story about two very special people that have formed a great love for a small, but very special piece of the Indiana landscape. Ralph and Sheri Trine have become part of the Pokagon State Park Family and have demonstrated their interest in a long term partnership with the Agency to develop the property for public use.

The story begins in the fall of 2005, as a 200 acre property formerly known as the Oak Hill Conference and Retreat Center would come up for Sheriff's Sale in the spring of 2006. A church in Fort Wayne had defaulted and had to liquidate



properties in both Allen and Steuben Counties. The Oak Hill Property lies directly east of

Pokagon State Park along I-69 and was originally developed by Ben and Helen Swenson, former Inn managers at Potawatomi Inn. When they left the Inn, the Swenson's purchased and then developed what was Wing Haven Resort. Later, the property was sold and expanded for use by the church as a camp. The property includes a 22 acre kettle moraine lake, a 2 acre fen, multiple wetland complexes, over 50 buildings, a three tier swimming pool, 3000 seat amphitheater and all the amenities that one would expect at a church camp.

Once it was known that the property was up for sale, the Steuben County Lakes Council Land Trust generated interest in the purchase of the property and established a work group to raise interest and the funds necessary to purchase the property. As the group desperately searched for



partnering and funding opportunities, local philanthropists Ralph and Sheri Trine, stepped up in the 11th hour to purchase the property at Sheriff Sale for \$2,800,000. The Trines agreed to hold the property for a year and to allow time for a group of conservation organizations and the Department to raise \$1,000,000.

On June 1, 2008, Ralph and Sheri donated the property to DNR which stands as the single largest donation in the history of the Agency, leaving \$1,800,000 as a portion of their donation. Trine State Recreation Area, named in their honor, will insure that there is never a "for sale" sign on the property again. It was important to Ralph and Sheri that this property be open and available to children everywhere that don't have access to their natural surrounds.

Since that original donation, the Trines have purchased an additional 1.5 acre parcel to square off the boundary and to provide a safe and beautiful access to the property off a county road. Additionally, Sheri is working feverishly to decorate 12 family house keeping cabins including: floor coverings, all furnishings, plumbing fixtures, décor items and everything else...right down to the flatware!



We appreciate their continued dedication to beautiful pieces of Indiana.



Dinah Fuller

By Fred Wooley, Pokagon State Park Interpretive Naturalist

Dinah Fuller and her family have been long-time users of our state parks and reservoirs. In 2004 she began volunteering at Shakamak and Pokagon State Parks. She lives near Shakamak and makes regular trips there with grandchildren nearly every weekend throughout the year. She teaches fifth grade at Eastern Greene Elementary

School by profession, allowing her more time to volunteer in the summer months. In 2004, she began working with the seasonal interpreter at Shakamak on occasional summer days. That commitment expanded into many more days in 2005 through 2007.

This past year, Shakamak seasonal interpreter Erin Brackney reports the following: though not having Dinah's exact hours, she was there at least twice a week for roughly 8 hours per day throughout the entire summer; except the week spent on an Outward Bound Sea Kayaking trip and time spent at Pokagon.

She began volunteering at Pokagon during summer camping trips. In 2007 she camped for two separate weeks and volunteered at the Nature Center both weeks. She did at least one program a day, staffed the Nature Center, and worked with park patch participants.

Several children come through the nature center each summer asking if Mrs. Fuller was here, or when she will be. She draws quite a crowd. Our boat hikes and night hikes are always successful and Dinah always has valuable information to share.

Dinah goes above and beyond. This year, she bought material for decorating the bulletin boards. As usual, she brought her school Nature Club at the end of April to clean up around Shakamak. They hiked trails to pick up trash, got out on paddle boats to clean up Lake Shakamak, and helped to get the Nature Center ready. She usually brings in about 20-30 children.

Her programs are very involved and she brings all of her own supplies and equipment. For "Natural Basket Making" she will have several big tubs of the materials for weaving baskets. All participants leave with a basket. For "Wee Beasties under High Power" she has a special microscope and lap top computer for

projecting pond water critters onto a screen for observation. It was like having an additional, highly trained seasonal interpreter. It even allowed the Pokagon interpreter some free time to sneak away for a summer vacation! She tallied 140 hours at Pokagon in 2007; plus the estimated 120 hours at Shakamak, totaling roughly 260 hours.

Dinah loves the out of doors, loves people of all ages, and loves to teach. She is a perfect good ambassador for Indiana State Parks and Reservoirs. She is truly an asset to DNR and has each park's best interest at heart.

Kathy Dennis

By: Connie Farmer

Our 2007 volunteer of the year is from the very first class of Naturalists @ Heart which began in 2004. It did not take her long to fill a much needed "niche" at the Falls. She filled a tackle box full of fossils that she collected on our trips to the quarry, and made a book with facts and pictures relating to the Falls. On Saturday mornings, you will find her at the bench nearest the stairs leading to the fossil beds with the spotting scope, binoculars, camera, fossil box and books.....well equipped to Wow the visitors with knowledge about birds, fossils, and the Falls of the Ohio State Park. Kathy Dennis is a valuable asset to the visitors, volunteers and staff at the Falls. As an avid birder, she is willing to share her knowledge by creating and teaching a Level 1 class on "Birds at the Falls." As a gifted photographer, she shares her photos and birding experiences on her blog site: life-birding-etc.blogspot.com. If that's not enough, she works with Saturday scout groups (which can be a real challenge!), and assists with the Saturday, Level 1 classes. Why does she do all this on Saturdays? Because Kathy still works full time! Thank you, Kathy, for saving some time for us.



The Tuesday Guys

By Jarrett Manek, Interpretive Naturalist at, O'Bannon Woods

"The Tuesday Guys" are now comprised of nine retired gentlemen that dedicate almost every Tuesday of the year, rain or shine, to the facilities of O'Bannon Woods State Park Nature Center. These guys have contributed not only time, but sweat, blood, tools, money, and their minds to improving our interpretive

facilities. This elite group of distinguished gentlemen primarily focuses their efforts on the Haypress and Pioneer Farmstead. They have been long over looked for their combined talents in construction, enthusiasm, motivation, dependability, creativity, commitment and education. Over the past few years they have grown to become their own volunteer entity on Tuesdays. They have strived to use old-time pioneer construction techniques combined with modern technology to create a local historic learning atmosphere for our visitors. The following list of buildings, projects, and photos are ones that they have completed over the past few years and are about to complete one more: a coopers wood working shop, smoke house, loom, sorghum press, barn lean-to,



"The Tuesday Guys"

water-pumping well house, and ox and donkey paddock. This past year's project of a summer kitchen equipped with fire place and brick-oven is near completion. These guys have whittled out wooden hinges, argued and debated, hewed logs, argued and debated, set rocks in mortar, argued and debated, nailed oak shakes, begged,

borrowed, suggested, and much, much more. Then they go home handing me a list of materials to get them for the following Tuesday.

These "Tuesday Guys" are truly outstanding and deserving of recognition. They keep giving back to the community and especially our park and our visitors! Not only are they here on Tuesdays, but they are here on our demonstration days, holiday weekends, and other special events. They each have 100 individual volunteer hours or much more, with a combined total of 1,304+ volunteer hours.

Please thank this group of individuals: Merle Behr, Ralph Jackson, George Herbener, Dave Elliot, Ori Bender, Fred Phipps, and Lewis Brown.



Summer Kitchen



Sorghum Press



Pioneer Farmstead



Coopers
Woodworking Shop



Smoke House



Would you rather receive this newsletter through email?

If so, you may want to join the Indiana State Parks and Reservoirs Volunteer listserv. Receive this newsletter, tips on upcoming opportunities, and more, through email.

To sign up, simply visit:

<http://lists.in.gov/mailman/listinfo/sprvolunteer>
and enter your email address and name. Its that simple!

****Unless you sign up for the online mailing list, you will continue to receive your Volunteer View newsletter in the mail.**

“What do our volunteers mean to you?”

“What do volunteers mean to me, they are friends with a lot of generosity, always helpful and each one has a zest for life.”

Carol Grostefon, Office Manager
Tippecanoe River State Park

“Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our state parks!”

Dan Bortner, Director

“They help make our community and property stronger with their commitment.”

Dave Sarver, Property Manager
Lieber SRA and Cataract Falls

“More Than Any One Can Imagine. Its inspires me personally - to continue to strive to provide quality recreational services when I have folks dedicated to the overall welfare of our park - in this case Potato Creek State Park. Thank you.”

Jim Webb, Property Manager
Potato Creek State Park

“Volunteers mean passion and care for our resources, helpful hands, and long term friendships with staff, other volunteers, and visitors! In one word - invaluable!”

Vicki Basman, Chief of Interpretation

“Hope and confidence in the future, service to others, commitment and validation to doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons.”

Rex Watters, Wildlife Specialist
Monroe Lake Reservoir

“The World.”

Brad Bumgardner, Interpretive
Naturalist
Indiana Dunes State Park

“...being opened or closed. Volunteers, neighbor and community partnerships provided essential extra help.”

Bob Sawtelle, Park Manager
O'Bannon Woods State Park

“Our volunteers bring a can-do spirit and a sense of joyful teamwork to the projects they help us complete. Our events become bigger and better due to their enthusiasm.”

Teresa Rody, Interpretive Naturalist
Upper Wabash Interpretive Services

Help Wanted! Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities



There will be a volunteer call-out meeting at Chain O'Lakes S.P. on Saturday, May 10. Drop by the nature center between 9:30 - 11:30am to learn about ways you can help your state park. A wide variety of help is needed; from 'agriculture' to 'zookeeping'. Contact Howard Luehrs, Interpretive Naturalist, at 574-834-5921 for more information.

2007
State Parks and Reservoirs
Volunteers Statistics

Volunteers/Hosts

67,167 hours

Volunteers/Hosts

\$3.2 million

Partner Dollars

\$5,933,563

Total \$ Value of

Partnerships:

\$10.4 million



Thank you!!!

Do you have questions, comments, or suggestions about the *Volunteer View*?

Would you like to contribute?

Please feel free to contact me:

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I look forward to hearing from you!



DNR

The mission of Indiana's State Parks and Reservoirs is to manage and interpret our properties' unique natural, wildlife and cultural resources using principles of multiple use and preservation, while sustaining the integrity of these resources for current and future generations.

